

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 12, 2014

The Honorable Jeh Johnson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Secretary Johnson,

Since you assumed your duties as Secretary of Homeland Security, we have been encouraged by your efforts to streamline the Department and to improve operations through your “Unity of Effort” initiative. In light of current threats to the Homeland, these management actions take on additional importance. DHS must function more efficiently if it is to secure our Nation against attack and disasters more effectively.

However, we remain concerned about the Department’s lack of responsiveness to Congress regarding organization and policy on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) defense. As required by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.L. 113-6), DHS was directed in law to conduct a review of its WMD defense functions to be submitted to Congress no later than September 1, 2013. More than a year later, we have not yet seen this report, nor have we been formally briefed on its findings.

Specifically, the Department was directed to “undertake an in-depth review of its organization, operations, and communications in carrying out its WMD programs, to include an evaluation of potential improvements in performance and possible savings in costs that might be gained by consolidation of current organizations and missions, including the option of merging functions of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) and the Office of Health Affairs (OHA).” This review was to be comprehensive and should have included “specific recommendations, to include statutory, organizational, administrative and funding changes” to streamline and improve overall DHS WMD defense activities.

We take this issue very seriously and are concerned that the Department is planning to take actions based on its review before fully consulting Congress. As noted in legislative language, departments and agencies across the U.S. government have centralized their WMD defense programs to provide clear focal points for dealing with this threat. However, DHS responsibilities in this area continue to be spread across many offices in the Department with varying authorities and functions, affecting strategic direction as well as interdepartmental and interagency coordination.

We want to ensure that DHS is optimally aligned to fulfill its WMD defense responsibilities. Therefore, we request the Department to provide a staff briefing on the findings and recommendations of its WMD defense review no later than November 30, 2014. As per Section 872(a)(2) of the Homeland Security Act (6 U.S. Code § 452), this report and briefing must be received 60 days prior to any potential organizational changes.

Again, we wish to reiterate our support for your efforts to help make DHS run more efficiently and to bolster the Department's approach to defending against these threats. Successful execution of this mission is critical to homeland security, and in the process, the American people deserve a chance for Congress to conduct robust oversight to ensure that any changes to the Department's approach are executed responsibly. If you have questions, please contact Alex Manning or Miles Taylor at (202) 226-8417.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael T. McCaul".

MICHAEL T. McCAUL

Chairman

House Committee on Homeland Security

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John R. Carter".

JOHN CARTER

Chairman

Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
House Committee on Appropriations